Documentation

What is it and who needs it?

Janelle Jenstad

What is Documentation?

Documentation is a "memory container."

The meta-metadata of your project

Why do we document?

Because we forget what we did or decided.

Because others need to know what we did or decided.

Documentation in DH

Documentation is common in the IT world.

Not so common in the DH world.

Key Questions

Who needs documentation?

What information do they need?

Taxonomy of documentation

Questions of style

Where do you keep the documentation?

How and when do you update it?

Project Continuity

The "hit-by-a-bus" documentation

Who needs documentation?

MAKING: Contributors to the project

USING: Users of the project

STORING: Archivists and remediators of the project (the memory keepers)

The Makers: Contributors to the Project

- New RAs
- Continuing RAs
- External Contributors
- Pedagogical Partners (Guest Editors and Students)
- Programmers and Junior Programmers
- The PI (who regularly forgets)

The Users

Scholars

Teachers

Students

Other DH projects (they like our data)

Genealogists

Novelists (and their Twitter followers)

And ... physicists?

"The most interesting use of our data will not be what we think it is." -- Mike Poston, Programmer, Folger Shakespeare Library

https://collation.folger.edu/2011/12/the-most-interesting-use-of-our-data-will-not-be-what-we-think-it-is/

The Memory Keepers

Archivists

Librarians

Users we can't even imagine

Someone who decides to remediate the project

What information do the Makers need to know?

The Makers:

- Need to know how to do things

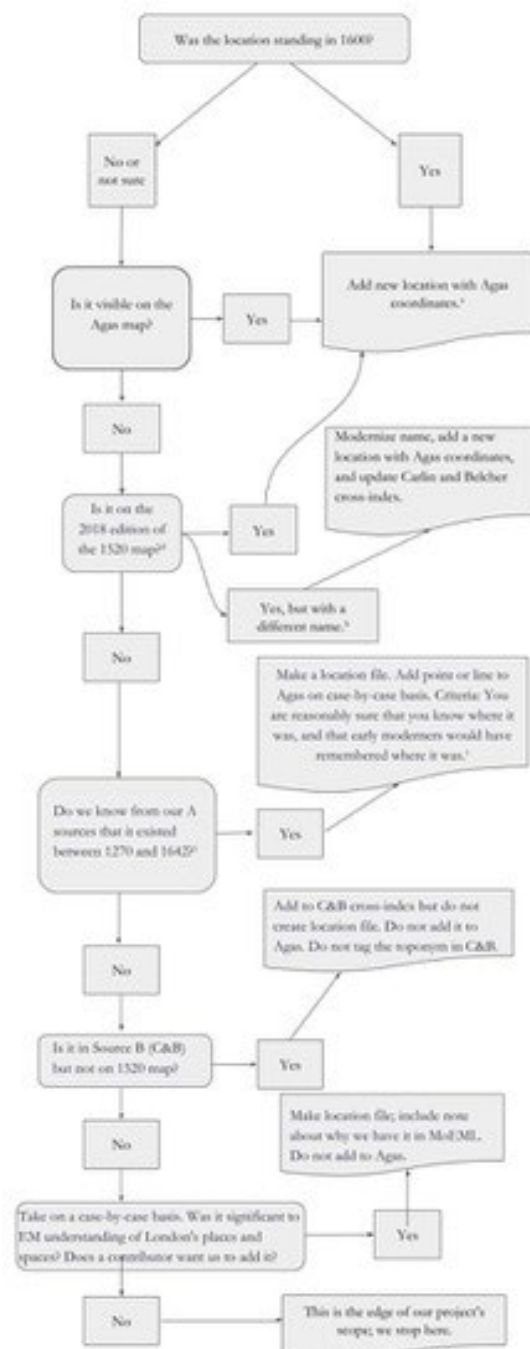- Need to know what to include and what not to include

Praxis

https://jenkins.hcmc.uvic.ca/job/MoEML/lastSuccessfulBuild/artifact/static/site/praxis.htm

Contributor information

https://jenkins.hcmc.uvic.ca/job/MoEML/lastSuccessfulBuild/artifact/static/site/contribute.htm

Determining when a new location should be added

Was the location standing in 1600?

No or not sure → Yes

No or not sure → Is it visible on the Agas map?
- Yes → Add new location with Agas coordinates.[1]

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Is it visible on the Agas map?
- No → Is it on the 2018 edition of the 1520 map?[2]

Is it on the 2018 edition of the 1520 map?[2]
- Yes → Modernize name, add a new location with Agas coordinates, and update Carlin and Belcher cross-index.
- Yes, but with a different name.[3]
- No → Do we know from our A sources that it existed between 1270 and 1642?[4]

Do we know from our A sources that it existed between 1270 and 1642?[4]
- Yes → Make a location file. Add point or line to Agas on case-by-case basis. Criteria: You are reasonably sure that you know where it was, and that early moderners would have remembered where it was.[5]
- No → Is it in Source B (C&B) but not on 1520 map?

Is it in Source B (C&B) but not on 1520 map?
- Yes → Add to C&B cross-index but do not create location file. Do not add it to Agas. Do not tag the toponym in C&B.
- No → Take on a case-by-case basis. Was it significant to EM understanding of London's places and spaces? Does a contributor want us to add it?

Take on a case-by-case basis. Was it significant to EM understanding of London's places and spaces? Does a contributor want us to add it?
- Yes → Make location file; include note about why we have it in MoEML. Do not add to Agas.
- No → This is the edge of our project's scope; we stop here.

1. I.e., include <zone> coordinates for Agas using the drawing tools at mapoflondon.uvic.ca/agas.htm
2. Look at the index on the back of the map.
3. As opposed to a variant spelling.
4. We need a location file and XML:id because we will need to tag the toponyms in the sources listed in List A (see footnote 5).
5. A sources include: Snow (1598, 1603, 1618, 1633), Sugden, Mayoral Shows, Shakespeare's London Theatres (ShaLT)

What information do the users need to know?

Where you got your texts/data (the infamous <sourceDesc>)

What you did to the text/data

Your principles of inclusion/exclusion (scope)

Who did what when (for citation purposes)

How to find things

How to use the features of the site

How to contact you, submit corrections, *et cetera*

Permissions and rights

Licensing for re-use

About page (don't get clever with naming)

How to do stuff

Tools About

Encode (Praxis)

Use the Map

Cite MoEML

Teach with MoEML

Contribute to MoEML

Work for MoEML

Find Resources

Contact MoEML

Textual Essay – standard scholarly stuff

Editorial Note

Remediation History

Encoding Description

Hint! You can repurpose a lot of your "how to" documentation.

E.g., https://jenkins.hcmc.uvic.ca/job/MoEML/lastSuccessfulBuild/artifact/static/site/diplomatic_transcriptions.htm

What information do the memory keepers need?

Metadata (in a format that they can add to their catalogue)

File types

Permissions and rights

A project history?

Information on any lingering dependencies

Information on technologies required to build it. Code structure.

Types of Documentation

How-to documents for the encoder and RA

What we did (to the text): Editorial Decisions and Encoding Decisions

End-user documentation: how to use project

How the code works

Requirements: to build, reboot, or rebuild the system

Technical and Procedural Documentation

How do we write it? Questions of Style

"How to" – use second-person, verbs, imperatives.

"Descriptive" – first person (singular or plural, as required)

Where do we keep documentation?

On the site

- In the metadata of every file
- On the bottom of every page
- In a section with a descriptive name (which you have to curate)

Pro-Tip

Create a "document type" for documentation

https://jenkins.hcmc.uvic.ca/job/MoEML/lastSuccessfulBuild/artifact/static/site/mdtDocumentation.htm

When and how do you update it?

Regularly!

Make a decision

→ Photograph the whiteboard

→ Add a task to "Add that decision to documentation" (attach the whiteboard photo)

→ Write the new documentation as soon as you've tested the implications of the decision

Do the same at the local level.

E.g., Write xml comments in your files

<!-- Decided this was a long S -->

Project Continuity

Where are other team members preparing and storing their work?

What email account are they using for project correspondence?

Where are they documenting their work?

Consider …

Versioning your working documents (in the repository)

revision.hcmc.uvic.ca

../
Amorena/
Brandon/
Brooke/
Carly/
Catriona/
Chase/
Chris/
Jasmeen/
Joey/
Kate/
Katie/
Kaylen/
Lucas/
Meredith/
Michael/
Nathan/
Patrick/
Sarah/
Tracey/
Tye/
Zaqir/
editorialboardrecommendations.ods
emails.odt
glossarylist.ods

Consider …

Setting up shared workspaces

GoogleDrive – make sure the project is the owner (via the project email)

Consider …

Project email accounts:
- london@uvic.ca
- digitalrenaissanceeditions@gmail.com

Role-based email accounts:
- moemlras@uvic.ca
- moemljuniorprogrammer@uvic.ca
- londonpm@uvic.ca
- lemdotech@uvic.ca

What else do you need to document?

Records Management System

- Where are the files (electronic and analogue)?

- Not all records belong on your site (some aspects of project history, personnel records, most parts of grant applications)

What to do if a key team member is hit by that bus we keep talking about?

(But don't stop taking the bus. It's good for the environment ☺)

Your "hit-by-a-bus" document

Where to find your "Records Management" document

Who has keys to the filing cabinet

Who has access to various digital storage and workspaces

To whom access should be given

Grant numbers, signing authorities, delegates

Successor (if you need one on a grant)

(Your programmer will have a "hit-by-a-bus" document too.)

Debunking Myths

Code is not self-documenting.

ODD files are not self-documenting either.

MoEML Documentation History

2006: A single PDF of 18 pages

MoEML Email Folder List.docx	2013-06-27 2:43 PM
MoEML_Citation_Guide.doc	2011-10-17 2:13 PM
MoEML Research Process.docx	2011-07-26 11:17 AM
MoEML FAQs.docx	2011-07-25 3:58 PM
MoEML Fixes Rolling List.docx	2010-08-08 10:30 AM
Personography and Bibliography Instructions b...	2010-05-14 11:44 AM
TEI Overview and Refresher by MC.pdf	2010-05-14 11:43 AM
Streets in Table Form.doc	2010-02-05 3:07 PM
mol_documentation.pdf	2006-10-19 12:15 PM
technical specs.php	2006-08-31 12:57 PM

Resources

Claire Warwick *et al*. "Documentation and the Users of Digital Resources in the Humanities." *Journal of Documentation* 65.1 (2009): 33-57. https://doi.org/10.1108/00220410910926112.